DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 101 217 CE 003 623

AUTHOR Bell, T. H.
TITLE The New World of Education and Work.
PUB DATE 11 Nov 74
NOTE 14p.; Prepared for Meeting of the Houston Chamber of Commerce and education officials of the State of Texas (Houston, Texas, November 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Career Education; Cooperative Planning; Educational Innovation; *Educational Needs; *Government Role; Interagency Cooperation; *Program Development; School Community Relationship; *School Industry Relationship; Speeches; State Federal Support; Student Needs; Vocational Development

ABSTRACT

In the past schools and colleges have tended to set themselves apart from the world of business and industry. Today, the national organization of resources for career education is receiving a new thrust. The vocational and educational needs of today's students are growing national concerns. The lack of emotional preparation for work as well as goal-centered plans on the part of the young call for new planning from the business-industry community as well as from centers of education. Career education programs have gained support throughout the nation and with Federal and State legislative support have begun to meet these needs. Cooperation of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Office of Education with the Department of Commerce and Labor can be seen as Federal leadership to hasten the collaboration of business, labor, the home, and the school or colleges to give Americans a sense of what work means, how to decide on a field of work and prepare for it, and then, finally, how to find a job. (Author/MW)

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THE NEW WORLD OF EDUCATION AND WORK*

by
T. H. Bell
U.S. Commissioner of Education

President Ford has brought together three executive departments to find new ways to match people to lifework...and ultimately to adapt varieties of lifework to the needs of the country.

In his August speech at The Ohio State University, the President directed that DHEW, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Labor pool ideas on how to synchronize the world of work more closely with the schools and colleges. Ten interagency task forces are now at work.

I understand that your Chamber of Commerce has been asked to sit down with other city business leaders to take on this same task on behalf of your public schools.

Setting school priorities and allocating resources to meet those priorities is a major challenge. Education is the Nation's largest business, with more than 60 million persons involved in spending nearly 8 percent of our gross national product.

Because education is a matter of utmost concern to a thriving economy, your task is of vital importance to your city, your State, and your Nation.

The eyes of the Nation are on Texas right now because of the celebrated Supreme Court decision in the Rodriguez school finance case.

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* Prepared for Meeting of Houston, Texas, Chamber of Commerce and school officials and education officials of the State of Texas; Houston, November 11, 1974.

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Resolving the problem of equitable school finance is your number one task, in my mind, and should be dealt with forthwith. But this must be looked at statewide. Any formula must assure a reasonable level of financial support to cover the costs of educating every child in the State regardless of the local property tax base. A good school finance formula must provide a broad and diversified source of revenue, with the property tax being just one thread in the fabric.

For inner-city schools, like those in Houston, with more than 50 percent of the enrollment from minority groups living in poverty, equalization in school finance means "more than equal" amounts of money to help those children. Weights must be added to the formula for these children and handicapped children, among other special needs.

Decisions about the child should be made nearest the child. Big city school systems should move toward greater decentralization; teachers should be held more accountable, and judgements about student achievement and promotions should be based on locally-determined norms or standards.

This is why I am extremely happy to see your educational, business and industrial leaders planning to decide together the shaping of Houston's public school system.

In the past schools and colleges have tended to set themselves apart from the world of business and industry--unless they were seeking money for scholarships or buildings. Economic and business institutions, on their

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part, often seemed to be interested in education as a source of secretaries or management trainees and, occasionally, professorial talents to grace a committee and add prestige to a letterhead.

These attitudes have been tired old hat--or old blue jeans, if you will--for some time. And the President's speech has made them seem even more tired.

Just what did the President say? He said:

> "Your professors tell you that education unlocks creative genius and imagination and that you must develop your human potential... You spend four years in school, graduate, go into the job market and are told the rules have changed. There is no longer a demand for your specialty...another educational discipline is now required. And so one or two more years of study follows, and you return again to the job market. Yes, what you now offer is saleable except that competition is severe. To succeed, you must acquire further credentials. So you go back to the university and ultimately emerge with a Master's or even a Ph.D. and you know what happens next? You go out to look for a job...and NOW they say you're over-qualified.
>
> "Although this Administration will not make promises it cannot keep, I do want to pledge one thing to you here and now: I will do everything in my power to bring education and employers together in a new climate of credibility--an atmosphere in which universities turn scholars <u>out</u> and employers turn them <u>on</u>.

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"...I propose a great new partnership of labor and academia. Why can't the universities of America open their doors to working men and women, not only as students but also as teachers? Practical problem solvers can contribute much to education, whether or not they hold degrees. The fact of the matter is that education is being strangled--by degrees.

"...What good is training if it is not applied to jobs? What good are factories if they are shut down? What good is business and industry without those who solve their problems, perform their jobs, and spend their paychecks?"

President Ford could not have been unaware of the work done by former ommissioner Sidney P. Marland in spreading the idea of career education cross the country. Sid's basic theory was that, whatever the level at hich a young person left school, he or she would leave with a skill that uld be used in the marketplace.

Sid's idea caught fire and, with President Ford's emphasis, the ational organization of resources for career education is receiving a w thrust. Meanwhile, there are a lot of young people out there who were st born too early; they are walking around wondering how to get a andhold on work that will still be "in fashion" in 1980 and beyond, nd that will start by earning them a living today. As President Ford

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reported, he found the dominant mood of this year's graduates was: "How can I get a job that makes sense as well as money?"

We should not underestimate the problems of the young. Unemployment among Americans between the ages of 16 and 24 right now is around 2.7 million, more than half of the total 5.2 million unemployed. It should give pause to every educator to realize that, even in today's economy, jobs are looking for young people at the same time that young people are looking for jobs.

A great many studies indicate that education cannot be thought of as a period of years set off from the rest of living and having little relation to adulthood as a worker. The challenge of jobs now available to those with high credentials has failed to increase in proportion to the increased attainments and heightened aspirations of the young. Our Department of Health, Education, and Welfare study showed that the expansion of professional, technical, and clerical jobs in the past few years absorbed only 15 percent of the new educated workers. The remaining 85 percent accepted jobs previously performed by individuals with fewer credentials.

So it is not surprising that in a study of college-bound high school seniors in 1973 and 1974 by the College Entrance Examination Board one out of four seniors was reported undecided as to how much he or she really wanted. Undecided students formed a higher percentage

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of graduates than any other group except those bound for the top four fields of study--biological sciences, business, health related majors, and the social sciences. And the number of undecided students increases each year.

There is no mystery in this. The cost of preparation for a lifework is higher today than ever, and it is expensive and time-consuming to take the wrong turn. Most young people are not cued in to the available choices and the needs of the future. For instance, when most people think of a career in "the arts," they usually think of activities that will carry with them glamour and renown...of becoming a famous painter or sculptor, a dancer or musician. Yet a serious artist might make a good--and distinguished--living as a book designer, a display designer, an industrial or fabric designer...and paint for pleasure and possible renown in the spare time that his or her talent earned.

The lack of emotional preparation for work as well as goal-centered plans on the part of the young call for new planning from the business-industry community as well as from centers of education. Better educated young people, growing up during an easy time, are facing totally unfamiliar pressures. Nevertheless, the promise of a good salary is no longer enough.

The ratio of pupils to guidance counselors in high schools is about 500 to 1, and therefore counselors these days are more burdened with the social problems of abortion and drugs than with counseling for lifework. Yet every

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study and survey points to the overriding concern with helping individuals, young and old, find meaningful work that offers opportunity for growth, with the prospect that job search and retraining may have to be repeated at least five times in every lifetime.

Career education as inaugurated by Sid Marland in 1971 and now interpreted through career education coordinators in 39 States, including Texas, at present means many different things to different school and State officials, but in every case the basic premise is enforsed. That premise is that schoolchildren should start to learn about the world of work as early as possible, be given an opportunity to experiment with different kinds of work as much as possible, be introduced to the facts of the working world through those who are actually a part of it. If these things happen, they could then narrow their choices for a first job in high school and go on from there.

Within this context, Dr. Kenneth Hoyt, Associate Commissioner for Career Education of the Office of Education, reports that:

-- Career education programs are operating in all 50 States and six territories.
-- Of the 17,000 school districts in the U.S. approximately 5,000 have initiated some kind of career education program.
-- At least 25 State departments of education have adopted policy statements describing and endorsing career education.
-- At least four State legislatures have passed career education laws.
-- At least three major national opinion polls have produced data indicating strong public support for career education.

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-- Many colleges and universities are now teaching graduate courses in career education.

At one time the home was where young people received their first ideas of lifework. They might follow in the steps of their father, or of an admired uncle or family friend. The father might have been a cabinet-maker, but if the family friend was a lawyer a teenager might join in the legal discussions involving a neighbor's land, and this might lead him into the law.

Now homes are way-stations, easy to ride to and easy to leave, with mothers and fathers on different schedules. And the generation gap grows more hurtful as parents and children lose involvement in one another's goals.

But the retraining that will be necessary to career changes of the future may mean a come-back for the home. The concentrated study that will at one time or another involve every member of the family could make it a learning center again. The generations will need to share experiences, without reference to which age is in the teacher's seat, as Junior (he or she) steps from a hospital job to pre-medical training and father struggles to enter engineering from one of the technical trades...and needs Junior's more recent knowledge of math to do it.

Work in our society is more than an economic need. Although need has brought upwards of 32 million women into the working world, a high proportion of these women are concerned with how they <u>use</u> each day far more than with how much they get <u>paid</u> for each day. This is also still a priority concern of most men.

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Work in America is the means whereby a person is tested as well as identified. It is the way a youngster becomes an adult. Work shapes the thoughts and life of the worker. A change in atmosphere and lifestyle can be effected by an individual by simply changing the way he or she makes a living. For most of us in adult life, being without work just is not living.

For all these reasons, the idea of work must be central to education, and young people must be trained to think in terms of employment.

There is some fear that, with the constant encouragement of work values and the breaking down of barriers between school and industry, the education establishment is emphasizing the needs of society rather than those of the individual. However, in breaking with outworn "credentialism," career education has erased the old idea that a person who has to change careers has somehow failed. For, in fact, career education forever stresses the point--as I do now--that career change aiming at full productivity for the individual should be one of the basic tenets of the career education concept.

Printers and construction foremen, dentists and lawyers must be called into the schools from the community--as they have been in 100 school systems sampled by the Office of Education during this past year--to translate their work and their lives to young people. Dr. Hoyt found many positive signs that the collaboration of members of the community with the curriculum of the schools, along with the involvement of local businesses, was working.

Students, Dr. Hoyt found, were going from the school to the community and using it as a learning laboratory. School personnel were receiving

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in-service education in the business-labor-professional community. Most of the high schools were operating a local job placement program for full and part-time paid and volunteer work.

The Office of Education can also point with pride to the programs, one in each state, that are set up with its support explicitly to familiarize elementary and secondary school students with occupations for which special skills are required, and the requisites for careers in such occupations. They provide students with educational experiences through work, helping them to leave school with initial job placement.

There should surely be no separation of status between those enrolled in the academic and those in the non-academic track in any career education plan. Vocational education students should find it possible to take as many arts and humanities courses as their schedule can handle, and mathematics majors, for example, might well want to enroll in some vocational courses.

The philosophy behind the collaboration of the schools and colleges with the business-labor-professional community rests on at least six assumptions:

1. Education means more than "schooling."
2. Students can and do learn from workers in the community as well as from certified teachers.
3. The best way to prepare students for the real world is to let them experience it.
4. Classroom contact with people from the world of work helps students decide career choices.

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5. If employers want young workers ready and willing to work, they have a responsibility to aid in the reading process.
6. The business and labor communities have much to learn from as well as much to contribute to education.

Cooperation of DHEW and the Office of Education with the Departments of Commerce and Labor can be seen as Federal leadership to hasten the collaboration of business, labor, the home, and the school or colleges to give young Americans a sense of what work means, how to decide on a field of work and prepare for it, and then, finally, how to find a job.

The specific role of OE will be to provide a package of career education programs which relate education and work. Interchange of teachers between school and industry should also be initiated, based as far as possible on competency based teacher licensing. Teachers from business and finance should be enlisted to teach from their experience in the workings of business and the American economic system.

Better systems of job forecasting, by type of work and geographical area, must be developed by the Department of Labor. Better knowledge of the numbers of workers needed, and job descriptions for those workers, must be collected and circulated. And all the high schools must maintain--as they do in our sample of 100 communities embarked on Career Education--regular contact with the State employment service and with a local career education advisory council.

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To help in the cooperation of the community with the work related education of its young people, community work and education councils should be set up. These councils should include representatives of education, students, business, labor, and the community, and should be headed by one overall national council directed by the President. The main job of the councils would be to ensure that working people on every level take an active part in interpreting their work role to students and that youngsters have choices in trying out the kinds of jobs available in their community.

Perhaps with all this planning the jobs offered to young people will not be the unproductive types that barely justify the minimum pay. In some communities they will be on-the-job training in workplaces made possible through expanded programs of cooperative education or work-study, for both vocational and postsecondary school students.

One question that remains unanswered is: How much room will be left for pursuit of pure knowledge, or for the arts and humanities that in their beginnings never pay the novitiate a living wage? It is too easy to say that we cannot afford much of this kind of education at the moment, when the country is coping with inflation and economic crisis. Every civilization--and especially ours at present--needs philosophers and artists, writers and musicians, and these special people will not grow on part-time work and part-time study.

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We must see to it that job satisfaction is not the only pay for those who go into self-training in these fields--for self-training is what it always is.

Our plan is to see that every individual can develop his own potential, with accomplishment of the individual's dream also becoming the responsibility of the community--a new kind of partnership between education and the world of work.

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